1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

142 young are comely, of a buxom type, and, like the men, with highly-developed calves, the latter always being considered a beauty. The children are frequently remarkably pretty. Khasis carry very heavy burdens, it being the custom for the 482 cooly of the country to carry a maund, or 82 lbs. weight, or even more occasionally, on his back, the load being fixed by means of a cane band which is worn across the forehead; women carry almost as heavy loads as the men. The coolies, both male and female, commonly do the journey between Cherrapunji and Shillong, or between Shillong and Jowai, in one day, carrying the heavy loads above mentioned. Each of the above journeys is some thirty miles. They carry their great loads of rice and salt from Therria to Cherrapunji, an ascent of about 4,000 feet in some three to four miles, in the day. The Khasis are probably the best porters in the north of India, and have frequently been requisitioned for transport purposes on military expeditions.

157 The people are cheerful in disposition, and are light-
522 hearted by nature, and, unlike the plains people, seem to thoroughly appreciate a joke. It is pleasant to hear on the road down to Theriaghat from Cherrapunji, in the early morning the whole hillside resounding with the scraps of song and peals of laughter of the coolies, as they run nimbly down the short cuts on their way to market. The women are specially cheerful, and pass the time of day and bandy jokes with passers-
[461] by with quite an absence of reserve. The Khasis are certainly more industrious than the Assamese, are generally good-tempered, but are occasionally prone to sudden outbursts of
[533] anger, accompanied by violence. They are fond of music, and
[797] rapidly learn the hymn tunes which are taught them by the Welsh missionaries. Khasis are devoted to their offspring,
593 and the women make excellent nurses for European children,
463 frequently becoming much attached to their little charges. The people, like the Japanese, are fond of nature. A Khasi
517 loves a day out in the woods, where he thoroughly enjoys
824 himself. If he does not go out shooting or fishing, he is con-
825 tent to sit still and contemplate nature. He has a separate name for each of the commoner birds and flowers. He also has names for many butterflies and moths. These are traits which are not found usually in the people of India.

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

614 descended from a common ancestress. There are other instances
582 of clans being connected with one another, such connection being called by the Khasis *iateh kur*. Whenever such connection exists, intermarriage is strictly prohibited, and is considered to be *sang*. There is no custom of hypergamy. A Khasi cannot marry his maternal uncle's daughter during the lifetime
[604] of the maternal uncle. This is probably due to the fact that the maternal uncle, or *kni*, in a Khasi household is regarded more in the light of a father than of an uncle. His children, however, would belong to the clan of his wife and there would, therefore, in ordinary cases be no bar to the nephew marrying one of them. Marriage with the daughters of a father's sister is not allowed during the lifetime of the father, but after the latter's death there is no religious ban, although such unions are looked upon with disfavour by the Khasis. In the Wár country, how-
587 ever, such marriages are totally prohibited. A Khasi cannot
582 marry two sisters, but he can marry his deceased wife's sister after the expiry of one year from the wife's death, on payment
582 of *jing sang* (price of *sang*, or taboo) to the wife's clan. A Khasi cannot marry the daughter of his father's brother, she is his *para kha* (lit. birth sister). Similarly he cannot marry the daughter of his father's paternal uncle. He can, however, marry the daughter of his mother's brother, provided that the brother is dead. This somewhat paradoxical state of affairs is explained by the fact that the children of the mother's brother belong to a different clan to that of the mother, i.e. to the mother's brother's wife's clan. The Khasi, Synteng, Wár, and Lyngam divisions are not strictly endogamous groups, and there is nothing to prevent intermarriage between them. For instance, it has been the custom in the Nongkhlaw Siem family to obtain husbands for the princesses of the state from the Wár country. There is no custom amongst the Khasis of two men exchanging daughters, i.e. each marrying his son to
[423] the other's daughter. Notwithstanding the existence of the matriarchate, and the fact that all ancestral property is vested in the mother, it would be a mistake to suppose that the father
• 593 is a nobody in the Khasi house. It is true that the *kni*, or
604 mother's elder brother, is the head of the house, but the father is the executive head of the new home, where, after children

1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

have been born to him, his wife and children live with him. It is he who faces the dangers of the jungles, and risks his life for wife and children. In his wife's clan he occupies a very high place, he is second to none but *u kni*, the maternal uncle, while in his own family circle a father and husband is nearer to his children and his wife than *u kni*. The Khasi saying is, "*u kpa uba lah ban iai, u kni uba tang ha ka iap ka im*," which may be translated freely as, "the father bears the heat and burden of the day, the maternal uncle only comes when it is a question of life or death." The Khasi father is revered not only when living, but also after death as *U Thawlang*, and special ceremonies are performed to propitiate his shade. Further remarks on the subject of marriage will be found in the Section which deals with religion.

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DIVORCE.

Divorce amongst the Khasis is common, and may occur for a variety of reasons, such as adultery, barrenness, incompatibility of temperament, &c. The rule amongst the Khasis is that both parties must agree, but amongst the Wars, especially the people of Shella, the party who divorces the other without his or her consent must pay compensation, which is called *ka mynrain*, or *ka thnem*. Amongst the Khasis it is not the custom to enforce restitution of conjugal rights; as a rule, when husband and wife cannot live together amicably, they agree to divorce one another; but occasionally it happens that either the husband or the wife will not agree to a divorce. Usually the husband would be willing to live with his wife; but when the latter consents neither to live with her husband nor to accept a divorce, a difficult situation arises, and it is in the event of such a contingency happening that the necessity of assessing *ka mynrain*, or *ka thnem* (compensation), occurs. The latter is computed by the village elders. Parties who have been divorced cannot afterwards remarry one another, but they are at liberty to marry into other families. A woman cannot be divorced during pregnancy. The following description of the divorce ceremony is taken from U Jeebon Roy's note on the

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1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

ancestral property, except in the Wár country. In the event of a divorce the mother is always allowed the custody of the children. Divorces amongst both Khasis and Syntengs are of common occurrence, the result being that the children in many cases are ignorant of even the names of their fathers. For the mother, on the other hand, the children cherish a very strong affection, all their sympathies and affections binding them closely to the mother's kin. Divorce amongst the Syntengs, though resting on the same principle as that of the Khasis, differs in detail, and must be described separately. It is as follows:—In the first place it is not necessary for both husband and wife to be consenting parties, as is the case with the Khasis. In the Nongkhlih doloiship divorce takes place before the relatives of the parties. The man has to give eight annas as a sign of the divorce, and clothes worth Rs. 3/- or Rs. 5/- to the wife. There is a similar custom in the Suhtnga and Amwi doloiships. In the Jowai doloiship the divorce takes place in the presence of a village official called *U basan*. The husband or the wife gives the *basan* an eight anna piece, the latter gives this either to the wife or to the husband, as the case may be. The *basan's* share of the eight annas is two pice, the remainder being spent on liquor. The *basan* is entitled to a further fee of one anna from the man. If a wife does not agree to accept divorce, she is entitled to receive two pieces of cloth from the husband to the value of Rs. 3/-. This compensation is called *thuem*. The divorce then takes place. If a wife wishes to divorce her husband, and the latter is unwilling, before she can obtain divorce, she must pay *thuem* to the value of the whole amount the husband has spent on her and her children during the marriage. Divorce customs in Nartiang and Nongjinghi doloiships are much the same, only the amounts tendered by the parties and that of compensation differing.

In conclusion it should be stated that the great drawback attaching to divorce in ordinary communities, i.e. the effect that it has on the lives of the children of the marriage, does not apply to the Khasis, for with them the children always live with their mother and their mother's family, which latter would be bound to maintain them in the event of a divorce.

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

INHERITANCE.

428 The Khasi and Synteng laws of inheritance are practically the same, although in some of the doloiships in the Jaintia Hills there are some slight differences. The Wár law of inheritance differs greatly from that of the Khasis, and the customs of the Bhois or Mikirs, who inhabit the Bhoi doloiship of the Jaintia Hills, are totally different from those of the Khasis, thereby supplying another link in the chain of evidence in support of the conclusion that the Bhois, or, more correctly speaking, the Mikirs, are of Bodo origin, and not Khasi or Mon-Anam. The Lynngams follow the Khasi law of inheritance. It will be convenient to describe the Khasi law first, and then to pass on to the special customs in vogue in the different doloiships in the Jaintia Hills, and, finally, to describe the Wár, Bhoi and Lynngam customs.

611 The Khasi saying is, "*long jaid na ka kynthei*" (from the
562 woman sprang the clan). The Khasis, when reckoning descent, count from the mother only; they speak of a family of brothers and sisters, who are the great grandchildren of one great grandmother, as *shi kpoh*, which, being literally translated, is one womb, i.e. the issue of one womb. The man is nobody. If he is a brother, *u kur*, a brother being taken to mean an uterine brother, or a cousin-german, he will be lost to the family or clan directly he marries. If he be a husband, he is looked upon merely as *u shong kha*, a begetter. In some of the Wár villages a newly married man is spoken of by the bride's family as, "*u khun ki briew*," some one else's son. It is,
593 perhaps, somewhat of a paradox under the circumstances that
764 wives should address their husbands as "*kyntad*," or lord.
611 There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that the husband, at least in theory, is a stranger in his wife's home, and it is certain that he can take no part in the rites and ceremonies of his wife's family, and that his ashes after death can find no place within the wife's family tomb, except, in certain cases, amongst
796 the Syntengs. Further, the ceremonial religion amongst Khasis,
562 especially that of the home, is in the hands of the women. It is, therefore, perhaps not to be wondered at, considering the
428 important status assigned to women by the Khasis, that women

776 Therefore nobody dares to appropriate the ob-
772 jects that have been thrown away or even to touch
773 them. Only into the house of the S'iem and into the whole royal family can no entrance be found by the thlen, and therefore some valuable things may be given to the Khasi king. This may be connected with the fact that usually on the next morning after the above ceremony nothing more is to be found of the objects that were given away. Therefore it rarely happened in former times that anyone kept a found object from fear that it might be thlen property and he might bring the thlen devil into his house with it. But if they did take an object they found, a piece of money or such, home with them, the oracle was first asked by egg throwing whether it contained any evil, and only when this was denied and the real owner could not be found did they keep a part of it; the rest had to be used for sacrificial purposes.

The immovable property is treated the same way as the movable property. Fields which the family formerly possessed lie fallow; nobody dares to take them over or to plant anything on them.
[476] But the whole village hastens to help the former thlen owners who have lost all their property. They are given clothes and rice and helped in building a hut so that they can begin an honest life again.

c) Story of a Former Thlen Worshipper.

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●593 How is all this known about the thlen, many ask, if the owners try to hide their secret? An indirect answer is already given by the whole previous presentation. Then it also happens, for example, that men marry into the house of a woman who is a thlen owner. Certainly this is not always known beforehand, although real thlen

[devil snake; see Cat 116, pp 28 ff. --Analyst]

776 owners can only conceal this for any length of
• 593 time with difficulty. Now when the woman gathers the members of her household and the unsuspecting man together for the thlen sacrifice, this man dashes out from fright and tells the horrible things that he has seen. He never returns to his wife by whom he was deceived by the concealment of such an important condition and he seeks another wife.

776 [229] The accounts of previous thlen owners
682 finally give further information. I will only
783 introduce one case as it was told by one of these. I am indebted for this to the kindness of the missionary in Cherrapunji, P. Corbinian Bonheim S.V.S. who has been there many years and to whom a former thlen owner related his experiences. This he translated into our language as follows:

"Formerly we were very poor people. Then one day we found a wonderfully beautiful smooth stone on the mountain when we were chopping wood, and we brought it home and preserved it. From this time on we had good luck everywhere; every undertaking succeeded, we never had losses and our fortune increased from day to day and even at gambling we never lost. Gradually we became rich people. Thus matters continued for four or five years. Then I had a strange dream. A woman appeared to me who said to me: "Look, I have given you such great wealth, now I also demand a sacrifice of you. You should sacrifice a lang thoh khlih to me, i.e., a goat with a spotted head." The next morning I told my dream to the members of the household, and they thought that she was the goddess who was demanding the sacrifice owing to her. So we sacrificed a goat. But soon after I had a dream again and the same voice as before spoke to me again: "I have demanded ka lang thoh khlih of you and you only gave me a goat. The goat, however, that I demand,

613 bakla): and as long as the expiatory sacrifice, in the form of pigs and
613 goats, determined by the elders of the family and by the sacrificial
682 priest (lyngdoh) has not been offered, the sinning member is considered excluded from the family and the family sacrifices. But even after being accepted again a certain stain still clings to him.

613 But it is also the duty of the clan mother to care for the needs of the members of her family clan with regard to food, clothing, and the like. She divides the fruits of the harvests according to the needs of the individual. She goes or sends to market to trade, to buy, or to sell. She takes care of the common purse and even the masculine members of the clan have to ask her for money when they wish to drink rice liquor or buy clothing. There the clan mother is generous
[562] rather than niggardly. This dependent relationship of the men is not considered unworthy at all or shameful. It is the matriarchal form and ancient custom. Nevertheless, the position of the men in the family clan is an esteemed one. Even the name they are called by has an important sound: Rangbah, Basan (oldest ones, advisers). On them falls often the work in the field and wood or the protection of the family; bow and arrow are handed to them as cradle gifts. In the more important family matters the clan mother consults with them. At the giving of the name, during a wedding, a funeral, or cremation the clan mother steps almost completely into the background, also during quarrels and court hearings before the chief (Doloi) or king (Siem). She is still always influential with her advice, but the actual appearance, activity and judgments is the business of the men. The smaller,
[782] everyday sacrifices she performs in the clan but; but she can also let these /135/ be performed by her sons. At larger sacrificial ceremonies which are offered by several family clans at the same time, by whole
[779] villages or even by one of the Khasi states, only the men are active as sacrificial priests.

613 With regard to the husbands of the clan mother and of the feminine
596 members, they are not considered members of the family clan of the women at all. They are only considered the begetters. They work and live in their own clan, participate in their sacrifices and burial places. The father has no further influence in the raising of the children, who belong entirely to the clan of the mother. But usually they have no obligation, unless the wife and children are impoverished. Even then their care comes in second place after that of members of their own
[593] clan. Nevertheless the husband is honored and is addressed by "Mr." (kynrad) by his wife. She would consider it disgraceful to approach him impertinently. Where the property of a clan has been dissolved or Christian customs introduced, the husband lives and works together with his wife and children.

[p.25]

CHAPTER III

It is evident from the discussions in the previous chapter, that the children born in a house have to take note, as they grow up, of the seniority and juniority among the sisters of the mothers, and also of the brothers of the mother. They have however very little relation with the brothers of the father, and we have to explain why the latter are classed with the father. This point will be discussed later. Here we may note that the relative lack of importance of the father's sisters has resulted in her not receiving distinction by age in the table of Kinship terms ; it is however indicated in address. Similarly the wife of the mother's brother is also not distinguished by age.

It may however be questioned why such a distinction by age is extended to the husband of the mother's sister. As noted before, a Khasi does not set up a separate house until one or two children are born. The children who are born in the house of mother's mother, are looked after like mothers, not only by the progenitress but her sisters. While there would arise no question as to who is the actual mother, it would be normal for the children to call the mother and her sisters by the same term which would thus cover the women of that generation who live in that house. Each little child would find its mother's sister addressed as "mother" by its playmate and cousin. Hence he or she would also tend to extend the term to the mother's sister from the mother. Under such circumstances, the simplest mode of distinction would be to apply the term "mother" to the actual relation, and add qualifying adjectives for the sisters of the mother. The Khasis use for this purpose, quite appropriately, terms denoting seniority and juniority for reasons previously stated. Reciprocally, a woman uses the same terms for

her children and sister's children, using an additional term for the latter, to make the distinction clear. The mother's brother's wife, and the father's sister live elsewhere, and cannot therefore share the same kinship term with the mother. The husbands of the mother's sisters are comparable to the father, as these males are all outsiders who have married the women of the house. The actual father "U Kpa" is the husband of the actual mother "Ka Kmie" and is clearly distinguished. The others are the husbands of the "Kmie San" and "Kmie Nah." Hence they are given the labels of "Kpah San" and "Kpa Nah" or "Kpa Khynnah." They derive their kinship terms denoting "father" through their wives who are called mothers by the children—not through any sexual rights on the wife's sisters. Such sexual rights, as noted before, have no existence. Hodson is not justified in ascribing this identity of kinship terms to alleged marriage rules and sexual rights which were operative in a hypothetical earlier type of Khasi society.

The mother's brother is important to the Khasi child, and has a special name, Ma, with an adjective such as Rangbah to indicate his position among his brothers. His relation with his sister's children is different from that of the mother's sister's husbands. It is more or less formal and ceremonial. A similar relative, on the father's side of the family, is the father's sister, though her position is not so important. Nevertheless, the two relatives are comparable. The mother's brother is in charge of the management of the mother's ancestral property and helps in performing important social ceremonies for the group. The father's sister is the repository of the bones of the father's family: in her is vested the preservation of the family religious traditions. Both these relatives live in houses separate from those of the nephews and nieces concerned and are, in a sense, of other households. Each of them was born in the natal house of one of the parents. They are therefore clearly distinguished from the father, the mother, the sisters of the mother and their husbands. But a common term, allowing

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1956 AR7 Khasi AR7

596 extended form more often when the children of the deceased sisters of *Ka-khadduh* reside there. This extension is on the mother's side and is affiliated through the extension of mother-child relationship.

Additional members like widower brothers or widowed sisters make the Khasi family a composite one.

In a Khasi family father, mother and her brother are very important. Father who is regard[1]as *Mynder* (stranger) or *Ushong kha* (begetter), has also the position of *Kynrad* (master) of the house (set-up by him). He is the executive head and the mother is the *dejure* owner of the household.

177 178 604 593 [428] Modern conditions and spread of Christianity have greatly affected the Khasi society and changed the Khasi ways of life but have failed to alter the traditional mode of inheritance even among the Christian Khasis. Another important fact which is apparent in the Khasi families, is the change of the status of the mother's brother (*Uknii*) in his sister's house. His influence has greatly been diminished due to clash with *Ka-Khadduh* (heiress). He has almost lost his control over his sister's [562] family. This has made the women exert their status to a danger point. Consequently, some amount of maladjustment in the relationship system, moral depravity and disintegration loom large in the family horizon.

596 613 Family is the core of Khasi social organization and the closeness of familial kin with the members of the sub-clan is due more to the fact that sub-clan owes its development to the family. A *Shi-K'poh* (member of sub-clan) is a secondary relative and can easily be approached for any help.

614 The functions of the above mentioned social groupings are as follows :

Clan (*Ka-Kur*)—It regulates marriage. It being a larger non-residential kin group contact between its members is infrequent. The amount of social participation needed on certain level to intensify the relationship among its members falls far short of. But nevertheless, there existed among the members

614 [illegible]

[1] [Should read: regarded.—Analyst]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

absence of A, D, E, K and N, U succeeds to the office if he is grown up. If U is too young, a chance arises for F's husband, if F is alive, if not, for M's husband.[1] In the event that none of these males be available, finally the office is taken by F and then by M. It should be noted that the office assumed by F's husband, M's husband, F or M would have to be returned to M's son, as soon as he comes of age. These cases are considered a temporary measure to meet an emergency.

The Khasi follow a strict descent line, and neither a classificatory uncle (or brother) is allowed to take over the authority of the *iing*,[2] though if there is no successor to the property, a daughter may be adopted from the nearest matrilineal descent group. Instead of the adoption of a daughter, the following steps may also be taken. The property is handed over to the nearest matrilineal descent group; or if there is a son, he may inherit his father's or mother's acquired property, but ancestral property should go to a matrilineal kin. In such cases, the particular *iing* actually becomes extinct: in the former case, though the property is handed over to another *iing*, this *iing* belongs to the same matrilineal line; in the latter, the property goes eventually to the son's wife and to his children, i.e. an *iing* of an entirely different *kur*. The latter arrangement suggests that though the Khasi follow the strict descent line, so far as the acquired property is concerned, the child has primary rights over the mother's other matrilineal kin, as expressed by the son's right of inheritance in the absence of a daughter. In this way, the *iing* may become extinct by the death of the female member who has no daughter.

The Khasi consider the *iing* institution as the basic and most important functional unit; it represents also the religious unit which keeps ancestral property and shares a common religious ceremony. This is indeed the key to the whole Khasi social organization.

III. Residential Unit

In this section I shall deal with the relation between the *iing* and the domestic dwelling unit and examine the type of relation maintained between the marital family (husband, wife and children) and the *iing*. Among the Garo, the *nok* corresponds to the actual group of individuals residing within one household. Upon this point the Khasi system is more complicated since spouses of members of the *iing* are excluded from the *iing*.

1. This would only arise in cases where the husbands of F or M live in the same household as their wives.
2. In the case of succession to the chieftainship, a classificatory sister's son is taken in the absence of a direct nephew or brother

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

years after his marriage. During this period he works in his wife's field, then, if the couple gets on well, they start to live together in an independent house (non-heiress's case) or in the wife's house (heiress's case). In spite of the fact that the inhabitants are all Christians, they have retained this custom.

It is difficult to determine at what date the Khasi people have changed from duolocal marriage to uxorilocal marriage. However, the present dwelling unit, with its fluid relationship between husband and wife (in fact, there are many cases of category 3), suggests a situation linked with the duolocal residence pattern. The fragmentary historical information available and the present Khasi residence pattern suggest that the duolocal arrangement may be an older pattern of marriage. When I was in Kongton there was no husband who stayed at his mother's house permanently, visiting his wife at night. The head man told me that, when he married, there were many who did not stay in the wife's house. He was the first person to settle in the wife's house. In his case, he said, he felt sympathy for his wife who had no brother who could work for her. After he had settled in his wife's house, many villagers began to follow his example.[1] When the pattern of a visiting marriage was in vogue, a village must have constituted a more compact endogamous unit. If the husband's house was in another village, a visiting marriage must have been a great inconvenience. The tendency to settle in the wife's house and work for the wife's house must have brought about a wider range of marriage contracts, such as with members of nearby villages, even though in the present form of marriage, village endogamy is much preferred as it is decidedly advantageous particularly for a husband, since he can continue his life in the same familiar environment in spite of uxorilocal marriage.

The variations in the pattern of co-residential grouping, which I have classified into four categories, reflect two different themes in the social structure of the Khasi. On the one hand they represent different stages in the maturity of the individual families concerned. For example, a householder who starts in category 3 or 4 may end as an old man in category 1. On the other hand these variations also reflect the polar opposition between the obligations of matrilineal kinship and the obligations of parenthood; a man, in particular, has conflicting obligations towards the *iing* of his sister and the *iing* of

1. However, all the information which I collected in the upland Khas Hills indicates that the uxorilocal residence pattern has been practised for a long time. According to stories often told by the Kongton people, they migrated from the Jaintia Hills. If these accounts are to be taken as a reflection of the real history of their migration, it would seem that the Kongton people may have kept up the Jaintia custom including the duolocal residence pattern up to recent times, while the majority of the Khasi practised uxorilocal marriage.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 his wife. Paternal rights are not well recognized among the Khasi.
593 The religious elements in the *iing* institution lay stress only on matri-
613 lineal solidarity. These elements tend therefore to orient each individual of the domestic unit to his or her own matrilineal kin group, the *iing*. This results in unstable relations between members of each elementary family, in other words, the marriage relation is one of the weakest.

000 This is the crucial point in matrilineal societies, and has been much discussed by anthropologists. Richards says,

> "In this balance of privileges and duties between the patrikin and the matrikin the crucial point is obviously the husband's right to determine the residence of the bride. If she and her children live in the same homestead or village as his kinsmen, his domestic authority is likely to be greater than where they remain with the wife's relative" (Richards, 1950, p. 208).

This statement is quite acceptable for those matrilineal systems which provide possibility for a man to take his wife from her matrikin to his house or village where the husband's kin are found, as in cases of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the Ashanti, the Trobriands and
591 the Nayar in North Malabar. However, among the Khasi, there is no such custom of removing a wife from her kin to that of her husband. Since most marriages take place inside a village, there are only two different residential arrangements: one is to take the husband to the wife's house, where he lives with his wife's parents and other matrikin; the second is for the newly married couple to establish an independent house. Among Khasi men and women the usual practice is to leave the parents' house at marriage, except in the case of the heiress (the youngest daughter). In this respect the Khasi differ again from the Nayar and the Minangkabau who form a sibling family on the basis of duolocal residence,[1] and from the Hopi, the Zuni and the Trukese who form a residential group of an extended family, based on matrilineal descent including in-marrying husbands of married females. Khasi sisters do not form a residential group after their marriage; sisters' houses are scattered over the whole village residential area, mixing with households of other descent groups (see Fig. 10 with List 8).

Then, what is the factor that makes the Khasi have two different types of residence i.e. uxorilocal and neolocal[2] within a matrilineal

1. Only the case of some traditional Jaintias (category 2) would appear to show groupings similar to those of the Nayar, however, I did not work among them, nor are there anthropological reports available for them, particularly in this respect.

2. I use 'neolocal' in terms of house-building, since they usually build a house for newly married couple in the same village where both wife's and husband's parents live—village endogamy.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

society? Among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment or the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards, 1950, p. 249). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the marriage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determining factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance and ownership of property, which is clearly related to the structure of the *iing*. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an heiress must be uxorilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 3 of the household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress become neolocal and correspond to category 4 of the household unit.

IV. Marriage with the Heiress

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The management of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the *iing*. The husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from this authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are always under the management of this authority. The children have more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors.

This family system is clearly reflected in the daily behaviour. When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said "please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, *he* would be the person who talked to us, while his niece or sister served us. In such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks of my stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

always somewhat outside the family conversation which was centred on the maternal uncle and his sisters, nephews and nieces, by whom I was well taken care of. This is somewhat similar to the situation amongst the Cewa and the Yao of the Central Bantus, which have what Richard calls 'the detachable husband' (Richards, 1950, pp. 233-35, 248), though the parallel is not by any means exact.

There is, therefore, inevitably an element of tension in the relations between the wife's maternal uncle (including parents-in-law) and the husband (son-in-law) and this tension makes the latter's life extremely uncomfortable. This awkward position is well shown in the divorce rate. At Kongton (see List 9), out of 61 couples (house-owners and their spouses), the number of persons who had experience of divorce was 33 (female 15, male 18) and those married more than twice numbered 19 (female 7, male 12). Out of 61 couples, there were only 31 in which neither husband nor wife had been divorced. In my census of Jatinga village, 70 per cent of all divorce cases were marriages to heiresses. In general, the period when divorce occurs more frequently is before a couple get children and after the wife has passed the child-bearing age. A marriage breaks up either through the action of the wife or of the husband, but generally through that of the wife. However, the state of separation which I presently describe is brought about by the husband, though later it results in a divorce from the wife. Divorce does not mean a great catastrophe for a Khasi wife, especially if she is an heiress and her husband's economic contribution is not significant. Moreover, in this society remarriage is as easy for a widow or divorcée, as it is to divorce. In the villages of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the couple who wants to divorce has only to throw a few Annas together in the presence of some witness, usually an elderly man.

In addition to divorce, there are many actual separations of husband and wife, of short or long duration, when the husband runs away from his wife's house to his sister's. Though it does not always end in divorce, considerable number of husbands have a strong tendency to spend most of their time at their sister's house. Khasi women often told me, "I don't know why he does not come back to my place." I have often found the husband staying at his sister's house only a few houses away from his wife's, without any particular reason. They are obliged to see each other every day whether divorced or separated. This kind of ambiguity in the marriage relation seems to have an important correlation with the Khasi social structure, combined with the village endogamy. The man and and wife have grown up together from their childhood in the same village and known each other very well. Hence their psychology cannot clearly distinguish the marriage form as a newly-established independent social relation-

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

ship. They still live in the same familiar atmosphere as before their marriage. The implications of this ambiguity in the married state are considerable. Particularly the husband's uncomfortable situation, when the wife is heiress, encourages him to take marriage less seriously.

A husband who undergoes hardship in his wife's house, finds himself as the authority in his sister's house; if he is not the authority, he can find at least a respected position as uncle or brother. In the case of a man of authority in the *iing*, the tendency for him to regard his *iing* as more important than his married life is proportionately stronger, as I will discuss later. Hence the most unstable and unsuccessful marriages are those between the heiress and the man of authority. This is one of the reasons we often find among the Khasi: a brother or an uncle, who is already married, acting nevertheless as the head to a family *(iing)* and as a member of its domestic group. This means that he is in a state of temporary separation or divorced. Among the Ashanti, a man and his wife's brother are never found as members of a common household (Fortes, 1950, p. 262), but among the Khasi, on the contrary, a man and his wife's brother are often found as members of a common household. In such cases, however, the brother has no wife, or never brings his wife to his *iing*. Therefore, a man and his wife and his sister never reside together. As far as the residence of women is concerned, the Khasi keep to the strict descent rule; two women who belong to different descent groups never live together. This point differentiates the Khasi residence pattern, in which social structure is involved, from that not only of the Ashanti but also of the Yao where the head of a descent group can bring his wife to his sister's household, though, among other members, uxorilocal marriage is the rule. These differential aspects of matrilineal systems will be discussed from a more theoretical point of view later.

In addition, should a Khasi man even succeed in spending his life with his wife's kinsmen, as soon as the wife dies, he will usually return to his *iing*, that is, to his sister's house, where he is received warmly and where he often acts as the *de facto* authorithy, as in the similar situation of divorce and separation. Thus the strong matrilineal structural principle tends to orient a man towards his own descent group, the *iing*.

The man's attachment to his *iing* is very great throughout his life. In this regard the Khasi differs from the matrilineal Negri Sembilan Malay. Among the latter, returning to the matrilineal kin is regarded by the man as an imposition rather than as the enjoyment of a legitimate privilege (see Swift, 1958, p. 157).[1] This difference

1. He presents this fact as one of the reasons of the durability of marriage among the Negri Sembilan. Indeed, on this precise point they differ from the Khasi where marriage is rather unstable.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

whom he can marry, he has to endure this miserable lonely life, while often in the same village his former wife is living in a well-built house with her children and her matrilineal relatives as before. Households of 3, 13 and 30 of Sohkynduh in List 6, and 23, 29, 38 and 56 of Kongton in List 9 are instances of such cases. It is really a pitiful picture to see such a man, aged and poor, living all alone.

V. Marriage with the Non-heiress

Outsiders who come to the Khasi Hills are often impressed by the Khasi husband's miserable status and express surprise at the high divorce rate. This is mostly due to exaggeration based on the marriage with the heiress. However, where a man marries a non-heiress, there are many successful marriages with paternal authority. In most of these cases a man's status as a husband and as a father is stable. First of all, the domestic residential unit is an elementary family. From the onset of the marriage the husband's labour is of great importance to his family, since a non-heiress usually has no economic background, i.e., no dowry or inherited property (see p. 105). The economic circumstances allow a man to be the *de facto* head even though whatever he earns belongs, as a rule, to his wife. A man who succeeds at the beginning of his married life is respected and honoured as father in his family for the rest of his life. By this type of marriage, the man's status is firmly established. It is therefore a more secure form of marriage than a match with an heiress.

In such a marriage the children love and obey their father. The management of his acquired property will be taken over by his son and the property will be handed over to his daughter. Thus the paternal authority is as well established in this form of domestic family, as in a patrilineal family. However, the great difference from a patrilineal case is that the husband/father status is not permanent as the authority of the family. Theoretically he exercises it in the absence of a male adult member of his wife's *iing* (actually founded by his contribution), in other words, till his son is grown up (see p. 12). In the next generation this will form an established *iing* in which the husband of his youngest daughter will suffer again.

The household of this kind of marriage with a non-heiress actually enjoys a considerable degree of independence from the descent groups of both wife and husband. If a man who has established a matrimonial life independent of his wife's natal *iing*, is not the authority of his natal *iing*, his relation with the latter usually becomes weaker. Economic and residential factors make it possible for the men to make the considerable shift from his *iing* to his wife's *iing*, and though

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 he clearly maintains the label of his descent group, he is at least
593 divorced from them economically. If a father's activities were such
613 as to permit the accumulation of wealth to be handed over to the next generation, he is always remembered with great respect and admiration by his successors and by the descendants of his wife's matrilineal line. In such a case he is looked upon as a member of his wife's descent group rather than of his mother's descent group. The best examples of this are the cases of men belonging to the first generation of Jatinga villagers, especially that of the founder of
[166] Jatinga. These immigrants to Jatinga mostly accompanied their wives, who were not heiresses (as I mentioned previously, the unit of Khasi immigrants is mostly found in this kind of a couple); and most of them established successful matrimonial life with paternal authority, having been freed from the gravity of both matri-kin of wife as well as of husband.

Not necessarily confined to such cases of immigrants, even in an ordinary situation, if husband is ready to devote himself for his wife and children, the matrimonial life mostly turns happier and well established one. For under the Khasi matrilineal system, a wife, if she is not the heiress, is normally oriented to develop surprisingly high degree of independence from her descent group, i.e. her natal *iing*, unlike women of other matrilineal societies. This fact is closely related with the unique structure of the *iing*, as already discussed.

As a woman (non-heiress) tends to keep a certain distance to her natal *iing*, her brother accordingly decreases his concern to her new household. The pressure of the authority (wife's maternal uncle or brother) of wife's natal *iing*, on such a household becomes less marked. The wife's brothers are members of her natal *iing*, not of her new established *iing*, and therefore none of them can act as an authority over her new *iing*, though they may exercise certain pressure on the sister's husband, since the sister who established the new *iing* still keeps her membership in her natal *iing*. In fact a husband actually feels pressure from his wife's brothers; the occasional visits of the authority of her natal *iing* exercise a psychological check on his whole control over her and his children. Should any serious mischance occur in the marriage, the wife will run to her brother for consultation. Furthermore, as member of her natal *iing*, he has the right to demand the property acquired by him if his wife has no successor, since it automatically belongs to his wife unless he acquired it without cohabitation with her, or through the capital of his *iing*. However, the process of segmentation in the *iing* leads the wife to greater attachment to her husband, particularly when his economic contribution is important, and as a consequence weakens her ties with her natal *iing*.

613 The limited rights of the brother over his sister's (non-heiress)

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

182 586 613 736 Even after divorce or husband's death, the Khasi woman stays on in her household. Indeed many divorced or widowed poor wives, whose children are still small, try their best to live and bring up their children by themselves without asking their brothers' help. Of course a mother and her small children may go back to live in her natal *iing*. Such cases are found particularly when the woman's *iing* is rich. However, during my field work, I found no sense of psychological inferiority in Khasi women, widows or divorcées, such as we usually find in other societies. The personality of the individual seems to reflect the social structure.

182 184 586 593 613 Given such strong residential independence on the part of the non-heiress, economically divorced from her descent group, and oriented towards sociological separation from it, the husband's economic and social contribution is handsomely rewarded by the establishment of a stable, happier, matrimonial life. In fact, as already mentioned, the divorce rate among such couples is very low contrasted with the high rate among marriages with heiresses. More accurately, I should say that divorce is more likely to occur among the latter owing to the conflict of loyalties towards spouse and *iing*. Therefore, when each partner has less loyalty towards his or her natal *iing*, the divorce cases become correspondingly fewer. Thus, among the Khasi, successful marriages are frequently found where there is branching off from an *iing*. And a new *iing* is always established by a husband's contribution.

182 184 581 Khasi men, who are well aware of this fact, prefer to marry a non-heiress, since they will then form an independent household and remain immune to pressure from their wife's kin. However, they say a poor or lazy man prefers marriage with an heiress. As Richards said of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the residence on marriage seems to be a most important index of the husband's status, though the determining factors of the residence of the Khasi differ from those of the Bantus (see p. 124).

182 184 587 593 613 736 In the case of marriage with an heiress, when the wife dies, the husband usually returns to his *iing* (the youngest sister's house). But in marriage with a non-heiress the husband often remains with his children, if his children are not too small and he is not planning to marry any woman other than his late wife's younger sister. If he marries his wife's younger sister, he has the right to stay on. This kind of sororal marriage cannot take place in the case of a man married to an heiress, since a Khasi man is not allowed to marry the late wife's elder sister. This form of sororate is found among the Khasi, but the levirate is unknown, such as can be seen among the Ashanti and the Ila, where a man takes his late brother's wife. Among the Khasi, even if a widow happened to marry her late husband's

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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological implication in the social structure, which is specifically related to the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti and the Ila, etc.

VI. Marriage of the Man of Authority of an *Iing*

Among these successful marital families, there are also shadows of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in the position of authority in an *iing*. Such a man, though he has an independent household with his wife and children, often visits his youngest sister's (or niece's) house, *iing (ka iing sen)*, and sometimes stays there. Such a man's attachment to his *iing* is not only social or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority of his natal *iing*, usually has economic control over the management, particularly so, if his *iing* has considerable property or active trading business. As husband/father in his family he works for his wife and children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of his *iing*. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in Shella and Jatinga, where the main economic activities were based on trading.

Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

A man of Jatinga, who worked in a shop in Haflong, spent his salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus, the economy of the *iing* and that of the co-residential group are crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy. However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired property goes to his co-residential group, not to his *iing*.

A man of authority is attached to his *iing* by the stronger ties of religious, social and economic (management) duties as well as by

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 sentiment, in spite of his forming an independent domestic unit. Such a
• 593 man with two households, the family of orientation and of procreation,
602 says "one leg is in my sister's house and the other is in my wife's,"
613 and he feels more at home in his sister's. In villages, whenever a
[123] Khasi man in such a position invited me, I was always taken to his sister's (or niece's) house, his *iing*, not to his wife's. There I was warmly welcomed with highest respect by the women of the household as the guest of their uncle (or of their brother), the head of the *iing*. Khasi men whom outsiders often regard as hopeless in their social position, thus enjoy the highest status in their *iing*.

One Khasi gentleman who occupies a fairly high post in the Government, at Haflong, leaving his wife (non-heiress) and children at Shillong, to my question "when you go to Shillong into which house do you first step," immediately replied, "As soon as I get back to Shillong, I take the way to my sister's home and there take the evening meal with them, enjoying their talk. Then I go to my wife's house where my loving children are waiting." This shows a typical Khasi man's psychology in relation to a family of orientation and of procreation. His first concern on coming back to his homeland is whether his sister and her children are well, since he is the man of authority in that *iing*. He feels much more relaxed in his sister's house where he is held in higher regard and more cared for.

I came across many similar cases. In Jatinga and Shella, such men on returning from their work, often have their evening meal with their sisters though their wives are waiting for them. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they sleep at their sister's house without even going back to their wife's house. This results in an unstable married life, where a wife has to face a psychological handicap caused by the occasional absence of the husband, in spite of her advantageous position in a matrilineal and uxorilocal system. Many wives worry every day over whether or not their husbands will come to their house at night. And often this concern changes into sadness and loneliness when the husband does not return for several days on end. The wife knows her husband is at his sister's house in the same village. But she has no right to fetch her husband home. As in Western social dancing, the women have to wait till their partners come. During my field work I often came across these lonely women, just waiting for their husbands, each knowing he was only a few houses
[123] away. Though these Khasi women never show their feelings of loneliness in the presence of others, I, being a female anthropologist, was often told of the sadness of their married life. The situation of these women can be more easily understood if we remember the process of the segmentation of the *iing*, which separates each married woman from her descent group, her natal *iing*.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

Thus, the marriage of a non-heiress and a man of authority also produces an unstable position for the husband in spite of his having an independent household. Therefore, the possibility of a really stable marriage is even more limited; it will occur only in the match of a non-heiress and a non-authority of the *iing*. But even these marriages cannot be free from the influence of a matrilineal social structure: the man of authority of the wife's *iing* may visit these couples now and then, curb the husband's power and remind both partners of the orientation towards the matri-kin, the *iing*, though this pressure is insignificant in comparison with that experienced by the heiress's family. Likewise, a husband now and then visits his youngest sister's house, *ka iing sen*. These constant matrilineal contacts offer husbands chances of escaping from even the slightest matrimonial tension. Whenever a Khasi man feels uneasiness, he will return to his sister's house rather than face a difficult situation with his wife. This tendency is maximised especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies, when all individuals are grouped around each *iing*.

It is apparent that the rules of the *iing* as the underlying structural pattern, function throughout the various categories of domestic unit of the Khasi community as the most important intrinsic force.

VII. Polygyny

After this long attempt at the structural analysis of marriages, I think one can theoretically predict what is the situation of polygyny among the Khasi. The theoretical framework elaborated through preceding discussions can also be tested by the empirical data in terms of polygyny.

Nowadays, the Khasi feel so strongly against polygyny that they have no knowledge even that they ever practised it. Many Khasi, in more sophisticated areas, did not believe my findings on polygyny in Sohkynduh and Kongton. I think this is due to the rapid Christianization of the Hills during the last hundred years. My interpreter, though he was not Christian, said to me in the village, "it is most regrettable to bring you to a village where we find polygyny." However, one of the ministers of the Cherra State to which the two villages belong, told me that there was no particular opposition to polygyny, though recent Christian influence gave people the idea that it was a shameful custom, and he mentioned the case of a polygynist in his area, a man who had recently died, who had had ten wives. In Jatinga whose inhabitants are all Christian, and in Shella where there has been much contact with, and influence by, Hindus, there were

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

which I described previously, where a man brings his secondary wives to his first wife's house in which he is acting as the head. Furthermore, sororal polygyny is prohibited, while it was prefered among the Garo in terms of wives taken from the same ***mahari***, though mostly not real sisters. The strong jealousy, which I observed, among the Khasi wives of a polygynist, would appear to make such polygynous marriages with closely related women practically impossible. As shown in List 6 & 9 every single one of the wives of each polygynist belongs to different ***kur***, and the two secondary wives of the man of Kongton came from neighbouring villages.

These aspects of Khasi polygyny are related fundamentally to the underlying Khasi social structure. It should be remembered that every married woman has her independent household, ***iing***, and that two women of different descent groups never reside together (see p. 127). The picture is one of every married woman holding a key-point in the whole network of the social system, and men fit into this network with much flexibility. The strong stability of women and the fluid nature of men in terms of residence naturally produces this form of polygyny. This analogy is also true of lovers' relations and illegal marriages. Though polygyny is a rapidly decreasing institution all over the Khasi Hills, cases of lovers' relations and illegal marriages are found to be very numerous among the Khasi, as compared with neighbouring tribes and peoples in Assam.

Throughout my discussions of various forms of Khasi marriage, I found men to be more or less in the position wittily described by one of them as "having one leg in my sister's house, the other in my wife's," except in cases of the husband/father who succeeds in establishing paternal authority, as in marriages with a non-heiress. Even in the latter a man might have a period of uncertainty until his children were born and until the economic basis for his matrimonial life was firmly established. For the rest, Khasi men would be in the position of either becoming the authority of an ***iing***, or swinging between their sister and their wife, which may produce more opportunities for lovers' relations. One of a man's legs is certainly always found in his sister's house, the other may rest in his wife's, but it may also rest in another woman's house. The wife being rather accustomed to his occasional absence due to his visits to his sister's house, another kind of absence does not mark any great change from the usual situation, at least not physically. Such situations occur particularly in the earlier stage of the marriage, as a sort of continuation of premarital affairs, which are quite freely practised: it is a usual custom before marriage for young men to sleep at a girl's house whom they like though they say sexual intercourse usually does not take place in such cases. This I observed in Sohkynduh and Kongton.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

182 595 Because of the firm right of women over the residence, Khasi polygyny can never be a clearly distinguishable institution, and has no operational advantage in the social and economic fields; the situation is very similar with lovers' relations and illegal marriages. By polygyny the man achieves no additional economic advantage, nor does he increase his social status or prestige; rather the reverse, for I observed that the polygynyst was regarded as a somewhat ludicrous or tragic figure. As for the woman, she is placed slightly at a disadvantage since the husband's economic activities are not concentrated on her household. However, even many legally-married wives are separated or divorced, so that such disadvantages are not only experienced by the wives of polygynists. The social disadvantage of being secondary wife is not serious, firstly, because wives, whether first or secondary, have social and economic independence—they do not belong to the husband as in the case of patrilineal systems. Secondly, the significance attached to the legal marriage institution is not so great, so that the handicap of being the secondary wife is not severe. What is most important, furthermore, is that her slightly inferior status does in no ways affect the next generation. Indeed such children, including [848] those of premarital or illegal relations, suffer no serious social dis- [851] advantage, though they are nominally distinguishable from legitimate children. From this it is clear that the effectiveness of legitimate marriage, and paternal recognition are rather limited among the Khasi.

Thus, Khasi polygyny differs greatly from the polygyny of other societies in terms of its operation and of its form. It also differs in the incentive to its practice. Among the Garo and many other societies, the practice of polygyny usually depends on a man's economic capability, but among the Khasi, it appears rather to depend on his 182 whim. Khasi husbands are notorious for their heavy drinking and neglect of wife and children. Some of them told me that their earnings, • 593 their children and everything they acquired go to their wife or sister, 733 leaving them with nothing; therefore they should at least have freedom to enjoy their life. This freedom seemed to mean women and drink. I am not sure how far this explanation is true, but it seems to justify their behaviour to a certain extent. I do not mean that this is the general characteristic of the Khasi husbands, but some such tendency is to be observed. Actually I often heard wives complain of their husbands' drinking and running after women, and was asked "Are your Japanese husbands also like that?", "What is the good of having a husband!" then comes divorce . . .

182 562 593 On the contrary, women placed at an advantage by residence and matrilineal inheritance, are required always to be on their best behaviour. There are very strict rules governing the behaviour of Khasi women. They are supposed not to drink, smoke, or play with

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any man other than their husband. Women before marriage enjoy a considerable freedom in love affairs, but once married these are no longer tolerated. Women should be faithful wives. They should be so in order to keep their husbands who have a strong tendency to leave their wives. The husband of a woman who has an affair with another man, will never come back to her. There is no attraction to draw the husband, who has home at his sister's, to his wife's house unless she is good and charming. Such Gurdon's remarks as "There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed among the Khasis. Unlike the Tibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time" (Gurdon, 1914, p. 77), is utterly nonsense: a Khasi woman is placed in a situation which is not easy to monopolize even one husband. Moreover, the Khasi social organization in general does not accord to the practice of polyandry.

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Within such a structural framework it is quite understandable that the predominance of virilocal arrangements, coupled with male authority as husband/father, are found. All observers of these societies have noted this feature. Among the plateau Tonga and the Bemba particularly, male authority is outstanding.

"Men are free to move and to form their own homesteads because they acquire rights over their wives which permit them to remove these women from the protection of their kin . . . As head of the household, the husband occupies a position comparable in many respects to that which falls to men in patrilineal societies" (Colson, 1958, p. 61).

"With the marriage the husband obtains—but only for the probationary period—rights over his wife's labour, the right to control her movements, and rights to her sexually. He is the father of any children born to her, whether or not he begets them . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 101).

"So long as the household contains a married couple, it is theoretically under the authority of the husband. The wife and her children form the house, the *inganda*, but the husband is known as the *singanda*, 'the owner of the house' . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 105).

"Once the young man is admitted to the family he is free to move his wife and children to his own village should he desire to do so" (Richards, *ibid.*, p. 225).

"This is a male dominant society and, even though descent is reckoned through the mother, the wife is very much under the control of her husband even while he is an outsider in his wife's village" (*ibid.*, p. 225).

The husband/father's authority was also observed among other matrilineal systems under certain conditions, as already fully discussed in the chapters on the Garo and the Khasi, and more predominantly among societies of the Ashanti type where the residential pattern was viri-avunculocal. However, the ambilateral structure on the level of the household composition may give more opportunity to create a husband/father authority of a more stable kind, unhampered by matrilineal force.

Furthermore, individuals are almost free from the descent principle in establishing their residence. Colson states in her account on the Tonga that a man has complete freedom to choose his residence, and residents in a single neighbourhood need not have kinship ties with one another. In the ordinary round of daily life, membership within a neighbourhood may be of more significance than membership within a matrilineal group (Colson, 1958, pp. 27-28). Oliver describes a similar situation:

"The out-marrying women and their children acquire provisional rights in tracts where they reside, and ultimately acquire full title to such lands" (Oliver, 1955, p. 116).

It is clear, in these societies, that there are two sets of groups on different levels: a matrilineal group membership of which is acquired

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621 descent grouping are often different. This is a very similar pattern to the
[184] mobility which I discussed in Sohkynduh and Kongton (see p. 112).

One of the outstanding features in this community is the strong paternal
178 authority, established especially in the first generation, because the father's
(husband's) contribution was very important in such circumstances: their
• 593 domestic units were completely independent from the *iing* either of husband
61 or wife. Some of them came with their wives, and many younger ones and
their sons brought their wives from their homeland afterwards, thus practising
621 virilocal marriage.

They have an interesting social usage which reflects the importance of the husband of the first generation. This is the addition of the name of the husband of the first generation to the matrilineal clan name in order to differentiate each particular descent group established at Jatinga within the same clan. For instance, Rupsi-Tah, Rupsi-Loh, Rupsi-Khla and Rupsi-Lati are found in the Rupsi clan. Rupsi-Tah is one of the lines of the first immigrants to Jatinga, which I have mentioned as Rupsi: Tah was taken from Pryntah, the husband of Sintu (Rupsi) (see p. 171). Thus the present inhabitants of Jatinga are very conscious of their father or grandfather, though they strictly follow the matrilineal descent rule. From such a usage of naming a clan, the Indian officer, who gave me some information about Jatinga before I went there, made the mistaken deduction that they had changed from matrilineal to patrilineal, assuming this to have come about as a result of the influence of patrilineal tribes around Jatinga. But this is simply due to the fact, firstly, that they hold in high regard the man of the first generation, because of his great contribution; secondly, that they distinguish themselves from members of the same clan according to the descent group established at each immigration; in other words, it indicates each *iing* grouping in the village.

178 The fundamental Khasi social organization based on the matrilineal system
did not change at all. I could observe in Jatinga exactly the same principle
184 in action as I had found in Sohkynduh and Kongton. The village endogamy
582 has also been well established in the present generation: there are about 20 different clans which can intermarry, and taking a spouse from an outside com-
61 munity has become very rare nowadays. Marriage patterns in relation to the
iing structure and all its related aspects are surprisingly similar to that of the
621 communities in the Khasi Hills. The solidarity of the *iing* is even greater in Jatinga, particularly among the rich, because of the greater accumulation of wealth and greater economic activity, which also increases the authority of the *iing* as manager of considerable property—this was also the case with the Shella people. Jatinga demonstrates that in spite of colonization and of a significant change in economic activities, Khasi social organization has maintained itself intact. This situation is in contrast with the considerable social changes observed among the Garo community in colonial areas like Rinsibara and Joshipara.

621 ***Intermarriage.***

178 From the earliest period of the establishment of Jatinga up to the present,
582 some changing aspects of marriage patterns relating to intermarriages are to
563 be observed.

As I stated before, in the earlier period, the people used to bring their spouses from their homeland, but they also married neighbouring tribal peoples, namely,
563 the Zemi-Naga, the Kuki and the Cacharee of villages close to Jatinga, and
also the Lushai, the Bengalee, the Moslem and the Anglo-Indian who lived
621 in Haflong, the biggest political and commercial centre in the Hills, situated

17: Banerjee E-5 (1955) 1962 ART Khasi ART
Smith

Then followed the dance of the girls (*Ki shad kynthei*) who were also wearing dress as described above. They kept their eyes down, keeping their arms on their sides taking such a short steps with the music, that the movement of the feet were hardly perceptible. The boys were also in their dancing dress as worn by *nongshad* and danced with fly-brush round the girls making their steps with the beatings of the drums. The music started from the morning would be stopped only after completion of the dance which prolonged till evening. These functions served as a good source of amusement to the people, enabling them to have a good diversion from their monotonous life with an opportunity to meet their friends and relations who assembled there from different parts of the hill.

535 (614)

Discussion

From the fore-going description, it is evident that the Khasi live in a democratic set up in which the secular duties are entrusted to the *Siem*. A different rule is followed in the case of religious festivals. Every Khasi family entrusts the sacredotal work of the house to the youngest daughter. The *Siem's* sister (Siem Sad) being the nearest member of his mother's clan, is made responsible for the observance of these ceremonies which concern the welfare of the subjects. The people attend the festival to seek blessings of their supreme deity U Shillong and their presence in the *Siem's* residence indicates their loyalty to him. The rituals of the festival, instead of being performed by her (High Priestess), were conducted by the Chief Priest (Soh bieit) for which he was allotted a very important position in the celebration. The musicians were given similar status owing to the belief in the sanctions of their music. It ought to be played in proper tunes otherwise the displeasure of the deity would fall on them on finding any slight departure in this respect. For this reason, the music is considered as important as the rituals and the role of musicians were consequently given due recognition at every stage of the festival. The tradition of dragging one person of Nongrong clan to sacrifice the goat at the top of the hill was followed on account of their ancestors having served us in olden times the profession of *sibi-lawang* (body guard) to the *Siem*. Another person of Khatsawra clan was also asked to carry the head of the sacrificial animal from the hill to the residence of the *Siem* after the worship, as his predecessors were such in ancient times during the period of their captivity in the Jaria. Such evidence was found expressed in a symbolic way through their ceremonies.

182 (582)

The most important concern of the people was to maintain their unity of living together with their property and other means of subsistence. They worshipped him so that he might prevent the evil spirits from doing any harm and may in addition grant them bumper crops. To be recipient of such a favour, they appeased their god U Shillong with gifts and sacrifices. It is not sure whether he is considered as one of their deified ancestors but his important position in the Khasi pantheon entitled him to have some priority in their worship. The offering of *mei-ewit* together with a yellow goat, moreover, revealed his amiable and benevolent nature as the malignant ones get representation invariably with black animals. U Shillong was invoked simultaneously with other dead ancestors, with the hope, that all the deities would pool their supernatural strength in fighting the evil spirits before the latter were able to cause any harm to their crops or to poison in any way the fertility of their fields.

996 769 782 996 182

It would be interesting to refer here about the preservation of nine pieces of meat from various parts of the sacrificial animal. It may be a case of appeasement by serving him with some food but there seems to be something

17 Banerjee E.N (1950) 1962 AR7 Khasi AR7
Smit

could not be in a position to divert their attention to the problems of basic 796
economics and other necessaries in their life. This is expressed through 182
rituals which are maintained through tradition and transmitted from generation
to generation. A proper performance of the ritual ensures prosperity.

The maternal uncle occupies a very important position in the social life of 593 •
the Khasi community. He acts as a manager of the family and his opinion is 609
always sought for in any matter of social implications. He is thus honoured 182
and respected by all the members of the house. In spite of the matrilineal
set up of their society, the men are given honourable positions in the affairs of
the family. Their role has been given due recognition in their various customs
and rites. The uncle (mother's brother) as also husbands in some exogamous
clans, are always remembered by the living members of the house for their
wisdom and sagacity. They are thus deified and are prayed by them to bestow
all possible help to tide over their period of crisis. The Khasi pantheon to 769
whom the people in general pay due reverence, are considered to have led similar 796
life as prevalent in their present society. Thus the various rites and ceremonies 182
that are observed, expressing clearly the duties, nature and obligations for these
deities, are simply a reflection of the Khasi way of life. The general pattern
of social structure has been found to be projected unconsciously through their
religious worship and these celebrations are of course of great value to the
local inhabitants as it re-enforces certain cultural features as characteristic of
the tribe.

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20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR 7 Khasi AR 7

strip of fine silk for the loins, a part of which hangs gracefully as low as the calves in front. No notice is here taken of what has undoubtedly been added and borrowed from their more civilised neighbours in the plains. 291

"Marriage.—The marriageable age for females is from 15 to 18; for males, from 18 to 24. Matrimonial alliances are contracted either through the parents or the living representatives of the families to which the parties belong. The mode of procedure is still very primitive and unceremonious. The bridegroom, escorted by a number of friends and relatives, goes to the house of the bride, where all are feasted and lodged for the night; on the morrow he leads the bride, accompanied by a number of her relatives, to his own house, and entertains the company with dishes of boiled rice and fresh pork. After remaining there a day or two, the newly-married couple return together to the house of the wife, which becomes their future home. Marriage is dissoluble by regular divorce, for any sufficient cause, and often without any assignable reason except mutual dislike or want of issue, the latter being the most common case of all. Marriage with the Khásis is simply a conventional arrangement, with nothing further for its object than the procreation of children; failing that, it is no longer looked upon as a contract permanently binding. Divorce is effected in the presence of eye-witnesses—the parents, or the heads of clans. Five cowries (kauris) are produced by the parties and exchanged, then cast away by mutual consent, and the ceremony is over. Parties once divorced can never again contract marriage with each other, but they are at liberty to marry into other families. Polygamy, strictly so called, is not sanctioned by Khási custom. Adultery is looked upon as a serious crime. If the five cowries have not been cast away by mutual consent, both husband and wife are held to be subject to the "matrimonial demon;" and even when either dies in wedlock, the survivor is not at liberty to contract a fresh alliance until he or she pays the family a sum of money as the means of removing the surviving party from subjection to the "matrimonial demon." The husband is a stranger, so to speak, in the family he has entered, and perpetuates the race of others, not his own. The children in all questions of lineage and personal rights follow the mother. There are always two incomes in the same family—that of the husband, and that of the wife. Whatever the husband may have earned or acquired in 58 591 586 [581] 587 595 837 587 593 611 593 428

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

593 428 wedlock goes to the wife and becomes her property; but all other property is inalienable, and reverts to his family, as also does his corpse after death.

771 'RELIGION.—The religion of the Khásiás is demon-worship, or a jumble of enchantments muttered by priests who are sorcerers. They invoke evil spirits as the deputies of God and the instruments 775 of His pleasure or displeasure. The Khásiás believe in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. After death, human beings are transformed into monkeys, crabs, tortoises, frogs, etc. Though a future state is not denied, it is treated with absolute indifference, as beyond the sphere of responsibility; all rites, ceremonies, and observances bear reference to the welfare of mankind in this world. The spirits of their departed relatives and ancestors are invoked only in so far as they are considered to influence and have power 764 over the present life. The Khásiás burn their dead, and collect the ashes into urns, which are kept under a slab raised on four others enclosing a space. These monuments are of various kinds and sizes —one for individuals, another for a family, and another for a whole 614 clan. There is no caste system, but each clan is called after some object of nature, as the Oak clan, the Crab clan, etc., and these names entail certain restrictions beyond which intermarriage is 771 forbidden. The Khási religion may be briefly described as the practice of forms to cure diseases, and to avert misfortunes of all kinds, by means of ascertaining the name of the demon who is the author of the evil, and the kind of sacrifice necessary to appease it.

797 'CHRISTIANITY.—The Welsh Mission has been labouring amongst the Khásiás and Syntengs for thirty-two years. The Christians number about 1000 [according to the Census of 1872, the total number of native converts in the District is only 85]. There are four central stations—Cherrá, Shillá, Shillong, and Jowái —and twenty-three churches. Translations of the whole of the New Testament, and a portion of the Old, are now (1876) going to press, besides other religious books.

197 193 'LANGUAGE.—The definitions generally given of monosyllabic languages are far from adequate to enable us to assign to the Khási tongue its position amongst the Indo-Chinese family of speech. Still, in the absence of a better terminology, it may be described as monosyllabic in the agglutinative stage. The monosyllabic element greatly predominates. By far the larger number of the compounds are mere agglutinations (in a modified

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

of father in Russian (for the *tzar*, etc.), (secondly) the youngest, not the oldest, daughter performs the family rites and inherits the family-property [34]. Even in cases when there is no woman to inherit, the youngest, not the oldest son inherits [35]. Among the conservatively matrilineal Pnár (Jaintia) this term of diminution *i*, however, carries at times a somewhat contemptuous meaning, though the minorate is strongly in force also among them. The ambivalent position of this honorific term of diminution is thus significant (comp. term 9/*e* among Pnár and infra.)

Term 7 — mother: (*i mei*) — The prefix *i* used among Khasi and Wár Khasi signifies particular reverence (supra: term 6). The classificatory character of the term has been discussed by CHATTOPADHYAY [36].

Term 9/*f* — *hep* for all younger siblings, cousins and even other young folk does not indicate the consideration which the terms 9/*d* — *kong* for older sisters and female cousins, or 9/*e* — *bah* for their male equivalents indicate. The term *san* (9/*e* among Pnár) stands here, as generally, for elder and implies a honorific meaning (comp. term 6 supra and term 13/*a* infra).

Terms 10/*a* and *b* show that husband and wife address each other by equal terms and do in no way indicate anything like an inferior position of either wives or husbands of which I did also not find any indications otherwise. It may here be mentioned that property rights even in newly established estates, vest in women and are inherited by women, — not generally men.

Term 11*d* — *ka khun khadduh* — the youngest daughter whose important position in Khasi religious ritual, social organization and inheritance law has already been referred to sub term 6 and described in detail elsewhere [37]. The affectionate character of this term finds vivid expression in the abbreviation *ka duh*, which I heard from sisters and the father of a youngest daughter.

Term 13/*a* — *mei san* (mother's older sister). The word *san* (older) here has a definitely honorific character, although the *mei khynnah* — the mother's younger sister (term 13/*b*) may be the heir of Ego's ancestral property. This constellation corresponds to the peculiar significance of terms 6, 9/*d* and especially 11/*d* (supra).

Terms 13, 14, 15/*a*, 18, 18/*a*, 18/*b*, and the terms for cousins 19, 20, 21/*a*, 21/*b*, 22 show, like term 7 — mother (supra), classificatory character. The restriction on cross-cousin marriage is of different nature, according as to whether they belong to different households, or not, as has been discussed by CHATTOPADHYAY [38].

Term 16/*a* — *ñia* (mother's brother's wife) is basically the same as term 15 — *ñia kha* (father's sister) [39] though the latter is qualified by the additional term *kha*: (begetting, birth) which signifies paternal relationship (see: term No. 1).

[34] GURDON (1914), pp. 83, seq.; CANTLIE (1934), p. 11.
[35] CANTLIE (1934), p. 22.
[36] CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 25, seq.
[37] GURDON (1915), pp. 83, seq. and CANTLIE (1934), pp. 11, seq.
[38] CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 35, seq.
[39] In detail discussed by CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), p. 27.

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

namely that male members of a matrilineal clan enjoy, among Khasi as among other matrilineal groups in India, a position which, far from unenviable, is a very high one in itself and doubly fortified by the respect which to the same male family member is being shown (*a*) in his capacity as the father of his children in his wife's clan (comp. term 8 of the list), and (*b*) in that of the maternal uncle (comp. terms 14, 14/*a*, 14/*b* and 26 and 28).

The terms 33/*b*, *c*, *g*, *h*, have classificatory character.

The term 33/*e* — *u kong* for the husband's older sister's husband is one of the exceptions of the rule that *kong* generally signifies an honoured older female relative but, as in this case, also her husband (comp. term 26).

Term 36/*a* *u pa* (father) in its usage among Pnár (Jaintia), also for stepfather is significant. A Pnár child has no legal clan-relationsihp with his/her biological father, who belongs to another (matrilineal) clan than the child and mother. Yet the honorific term *pa* is, among Pnár, also applied to a stepfather, although neither legal, nor biological but merely ideological relationship via the mother, exists between stepfather and -child. This use of the word *pa* thus seems to emphasize both, firstly the integration of the matrilineal family structure, by making an unrelated stepfather to be looked upon as father, owing to his relationship with Ego's mother and, secondly the important sociological and psychological position of the father in this matrilineal family structure which appears to go back to an old tradition among the Pnár.

Term 41 — *para 'riew lum* [33] (Assamese hill tribals) are characteristically termed *para* (Brethren), although they are different in many respects, from the Khasi, yet considered as definitely nearer related than all other neighbours, grouped under the

Term 43 — *dkhar* (plainspeople) [34], — a term which varies in emotional content from contempt pure and simple to an attitude, somewhat parallel to what ordinary English usage would generally associate with the expression "continental". Marriages of Khasi girls and boys with *dkhar* do occur, though infinitely rarer than marriages of (especially educated) Khasi girls with (educated) *para 'riew lum*, Nepalese, Gurkha or Chinese boys. One of the reasons which is usually being given for this preference for non-Indians is by no means colour-prejudice, but the taboo on either beef or pork which most *dkhar iong* [35] (Indians, Hindus or Muslims, respectively) observe; a taboo which they generally extend to their Khasi wives, thus preventing them from enjoying two favourite Khasi national dishes. Another more psychological reason is the overbearing treatment of wives, which is generally ascribed to *dkhar iong*, more even than to *dkhar li* [36]. It is in this connection

[33] Literally: Brethren Humans Hill.

[34] With Dkhar are here meant the plainspeople as such; — not the Khasi Dkhar (or Khar) clans which are mostly, if not always, descended from ancestresses who had been captured in the plains and brought to the Khasi Hills; comp. CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 30/31 and EHRENFELS (1950/*A*), pp. 33/34.

[35] Literally: Plainspeople black.

[36] Literally: Plainspeople white.